

Interviewer: Okay sir what is your full name?

Waller: William Russell Waller

Interviewer: And when and where were you born?

Waller: Southside Tennessee

Interviewer: And you were in the service what branch did you serve in?

Waller: The Army

Interviewer: And what unit did you spend most of your time in?

Waller: The 2<sup>nd</sup> Armor Division Hell on Wheels.

Interviewer: What were your parent's names and what did they do for a living?

Waller: Henry W. Waller and Lucy Char Waller.

Interviewer: How many brothers and sisters did you have?

Waller: One sister two sisters and I was the only boy. Three of us in the family.

Interviewer: What are your memories of the great depression?

Waller: Well it was rough my mother canned everything she could find every where around we share cropped we gave a fourth of the tobacco what the tobacco brought to one that owned the land and that's how we made of course my uncle lived in Nashville he took care of us in essence because it was rough in those days.

Interviewer: Did you know a lot of people who were long term unemployed during that time?

Waller: Well there wasn't anybody around south side employed much they raised everything they ate.

Interviewer: How did you or your family feel about FDR and his New Deal Programs did it really affect you at all?

Waller: Well it didn't affect me because they were too proud to except anything from anybody. People in those days people were really proud and I don't guess we we didn't except anything. We got everything we had and earned it our self and my mother was an industrious person and she took care of us. Of course my daddy was hurt he couldn't work much. I would plow the field and my daddy would sit at the end of the row and watch me where I wouldn't get hurt and drag that ole two horse plow around 12 or 13 years old was quite a chore for me because I was a small person anyhow. But he sat out there and watched me so I wouldn't get hurt.

Interviewer: Did you happen to listen to any of Roosevelt's Fireside Chats on the radio?

Waller: We didn't have a radio we didn't have a radio until I came back well no let's see we had a radio I believe when I was home on furlough when they bombed Pearl Harbor. And we listened to some of that.

Interviewer: When did you join the military?

Waller: July 41 I didn't join I was drafted for one year. My draft number was 313 I was in New Jersey working and of course I guess it was easy for them I registered there and I had it transferred back to Tennessee so I'd have to leave from Tennessee.

Interviewer: Before the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor did you ever think the United States would be involved in a war between Japan and Germany?

Waller: I'll tell you I never thought too much about it. Of course I was a young 21 I believe I was 21 years old and I didn't have too many worries back then until I got in the Army.

Interviewer: Had you heard any news about the Nazis and Germany or Hitler before that time?

Waller: Yeah I had read some I tried to keep up with the news with the store I could hear the radio at the store. That's about the only place we could hear it.

Interviewer: Did you happen to have a job before you went into the service?

Waller: Oh yeah well I went to New Jersey as soon as I got out of high school I left Clarksville and went to New Jersey. Some boys were down here and I went back them of course they told me I could get a job at White Castle and I did. And I worked up there for about well it wasn't hardly five years.

Interviewer: Do you recall exactly how you got the news that the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor?

Waller: I don't know I was home on furlough and maybe it was on the radio. The president's speech Roosevelt's speech was on the radio and of course we all heard it and everyone was supposed to report back to the base and I left the next day I believe it was after I heard it.

Interviewer: What types of feelings or emotions when through you when you found out about Pearl Harbor?

Waller: Well they were real high. Of course I knew the war would be and I probably would never come back.

Interviewer: Did you, you said you heard Roosevelt's speech

Waller: I don't think I heard it I don't recall hearing it but they heard it my sister did she was older than me about six years older than I.

Interviewer: Did you agree with how FRD seemed to handle the situation at that time?

Waller: Oh yeah he didn't have any choice they attacked us and we had to go.

Interviewer: And you mentioned that you were drafted. Did you happen to have a preference into what branch of the service you went into?

Waller: No no I didn't have any preference at all. I went to Fort Overthorpe Georgia for basic training well part of it was there then they shipped me out to Camp Wheeler Georgia. That's where I had my infantry basic training for the infantry and luckily I can remember my buddy and I went in together from south side. And his name was Warren and mine had an "er" so we knew we were going to stay together. But it so happened that they put us on a bulletin board one day at camp wheeler they wanted truck drivers and of course Wallace said he wanted to get out of the infantry. And he signed up and tried to get me to and I wouldn't do it. Well I wound up with a truck driver for the armor division and Wallace went to the infantry. I believe he was in the 4<sup>th</sup> infantry division and he got shot all to pieces in the invasion of Normandy.

Interviewer: When you went down to the induction center did they happen to give you any special skills test or an IQ test anything of that nature?

Waller: I don't recall any they could have but I don't recall any.

Interviewer: What was your general impression of the fellow recruits that you were in during basic training?

Waller: Well it was hard down there the old saying you take two steps up and you slip back one in that sand. And of course we did a lot of the 25 mile hike so I dodged some of it because I was a ball player and I made the Fort Benning team in baseball. And that helped me out a lot some of those 25 mile hikes. The Chaplain would take us and the other boys would go with the regular Sargent and we got a lot of privileges but we still had to make it.

Interviewer: Was that your first time away from home?

Waller: No I'd been in New Jersey see about five years prior to that a little less than five years. I left right out of high school I was 17 or 18 years old when I first left. I graduated high school and left within the next couple of weeks. And of course left everything my mom and dad and went up there I had sent back I sent the forms the paper work and so forth back to Tennessee and they drafted me from Tennessee. My draft number was 313 I won't ever forget that. That's a heck of a draft number.

Interviewer: Did you happen to participate in any maneuvers stateside?

Waller: Oh yeah I got to Fort Benning I didn't participate in Louisiana maneuvers I did in the South Carolina maneuvers. I did the road march we had to go out and look last night and I saw I had the print out where the route we would take going to South Carolina South and North Carolina.

Interviewer: How did you feel about your training did you feel it was adequate did you feel prepared for what lay ahead?

Waller: Well I think I trained with a wooden gun I believe it was Fort Overthorpe or I guess it was Fort Overthorpe it might be Camp Wheeler I don't remember don't recall. But we didn't have anything hardly then and training was just mostly getting in physical shape walking and hiking and all kind of exercise bayonet practice and all such as that in the infantry. Anything that was physical why

Interviewer: How about the living conditions there in the camps as far as health and sanitation.

Waller: Well it was good I would say a lot better than what I had at home I'll tell you that. Because we had an outdoor toilet and didn't have that until I don't know I was in high school I think before we ever got that. People can't realize how things were back then.

Interviewer: What kind of unit did you serve with immediately after you left your basic?

Waller: Well I wasn't in a unit other than the training part a training unit I guess you would call it.

Interviewer: Where did your unit where did you depart from the United States?

Waller: New York

Interviewer: New York?

Waller: Yeah we went to Fort Dix we were on maneuvers in Carolina I believe if I remember correctly and we left Carolina going to New York Fort Dix and that's where we sailed from.

Interviewer: Did you leave in the morning or was it

Waller: I believe it was in the morning not early but up in the day. Sailed in right through the Caribbean my buddy and I we stayed together all the time but he didn't come back.

Interviewer: When you departed from New York did you have any thoughts about the German U-boat threat?

Waller: Yeah we had them everyday going across down in the Caribbean we went right down about 100 or so miles off the coast of the US down in the Caribbean. We were going to North Africa is where we were going but we I didn't know where we were going. But we just sailed right through the Caribbean we had alerts all the time. I remember one of the first times we ever had one everybody was lounging around somewhere you know how they would sleep and carry on and all of a sudden all the guns, and we had a big battleship over beside of us and all his guns went off and everybody was running to get up on the deck to see what happened. And it was just gun practice they was practicing but it wasn't long after that until we started having all the time you'd see those destroyers and dropping good charges and

Interviewer: Do you recall what type of ship you were no was it a military

Waller: I was on the USS Brazil it was an old luxury liner that had been converted. It had a swimming pool of course it didn't use that swimming pool we had bed rolls and so forth soldiers used on it. We had about 5,000 soldiers on that ship.

Interviewer: And you said you were headed to North Africa do you remember whereabouts you landed at?

Waller: Yeah Casa Blanca we landed there on New Years Eve had a Germans raided the harbor that day but they had gotten us off of the ship but we were right on the edge of town. And those bombers would come in bombing the harbor and of course ships were firing back at them there was really a display of fireworks. But we were sitting out on a little hill outside of town all of us were and if they had only that armor division would have looked down there at the men they could have dropped a bomb on us but they didn't know it see. When we arrived they come out and turned right over us and go right back to bomb again see. Of course we didn't fire at them or anything we didn't have anything to fire at them with.

Interviewer: When you landed how was the housing were you in temporary or permanent barracks?

Waller: No we stayed in the field we never were in barracks. We left out of there and went to Robot from Casa Blanca to Robot and that's where we stayed during the war I think our mission was more or less to guard the Moroccan border. We didn't see any combat or at least I didn't some of my outfit did they invaded Casa Blanca but I wasn't in that group.

Interviewer: How informed were you of the reputations of some of the big names like General Montgomery or Ronald the Deader fox?

Waller: I knew Ronald I didn't know him but I knew of him what I meant to say. No we were well I was moving an outfit well I had I don't know how many trucks 15 or 20 trucks moving antiaircraft outfit to the front from Robot about a thousand miles. And Ronald we heard or I heard that Ronald had broken through the lines of the Kasserine Pass. And we were not far from Constantine North Africa and we they pulled my truck and four others out of that convoy and tried to make the soldiers get on the other truck just to divide them up some and I went in Constantine and picked up a truck load of ammunition. Tank and a tank can that's just what it was and they tied a trailer on behind me and I was driving that big truck and a trailer behind me and all of those mountains around the lieutenant went off and left us. And I was the lead truck I sweated that deal soldiers coming out on the side of the road hadn't shaved and

Interviewer: Now at that point were you still with the same unit?

Waller: Yeah they just detached me I guess you'd say detached me to move this outfit up there of course I came back to my outfit.

Interviewer: Now you mentioned your lieutenant leaving what was your general impression of your officers and your NCOs directly above you?

Waller: Well personally I didn't like the Army and I couldn't see the idea of saluting somebody and they were right I know an ole lieutenant he used to call me we were in Sicily call me to come down and he wanted to talk to me. He was in a fox hole and we were standing on the outside and they were strafing the area and I I've always resented that. Of course I kept it to myself I didn't talk it.

Interviewer: How were your Sargents?

Waller: They were good I had a good Sargent he was good to me. Of course me being a ball player I'm sure that helped out. I know it did

Interviewer: What kind of you mentioned you were training with wooded swords excuse me I mean wooden guns back in the states what did you have now as far as your standard equipment?

Waller: A 50 caliber had a ring on top of the truck I'm sure you've seen those and a 50 caliber machine gun mounted on top. And it was well later on they gave me a driver and I stayed on the machine gun all the time. We'd go to the front and take the boys something to eat. They looked forward to us coming gasoline, something to eat, ammunition so forth that was my job.

Interviewer: Well how well general y how well did your equipment operate on a day to day basis and throughout combat?

Waller: Well tanks of course tanks would go out and well at the breakthrough at St. Low that's where we had a rough time. And everybody seemed to think what I read wasn't much to it I listened to half track buddies calling talking to each other on the tanks get that tank get that tank he's shooting right there. Them boys you know see been with them two or three years you got to know them all real well you could almost tell them all by their voice. It was sort of hair raising. But I know that's where my buddy got killed St. Low we never could fine him. A truck pulled into a place and of course it was well no body didn't know what was going on everybody seeing that break through. We broke through and was going just as fast as we could and of course we had to follow the tanks and a tank got in a convoy with us one night a German tank. Of course he got out of it don't know what ever happened but I was told that the next day. I was tell you about my buddy he pulled in an area and there was three of them on a truck and two of them made it to a fox hole and he never did make it. They never could find him they thought this tank hit him directly. That's the worst job I ever had in the army going around getting my buddies out of tanks.

Interviewer: Were the majority of these tanks Shermans?

Waller: Yeh that was the hardest job I had in the Army.

Interviewer: Well I know this is a touchy question but what was your first experience in combat?

Waller: I didn't have any combat I didn't see any. See I'd take that food up there and gasoline stuff and unload it as fast as I could and get out of there. Of course the tanks were usually they weren't on the front line when we'd do that they were back a ways from the carrier then they would go from there out the next day. Had one ole boy if I remember correctly he had three tanks knocked out from under him.

Interviewer: Well how would you describe the comradery the cohesion within your unit? Did you click pretty well with your comrades'?

Waller: Oh yeah yeah I think everybody was real nice to me as far as that's concerned yeah. You were cussed out everyday and such as this you didn't have nothing like that. We had one ole Sargent like that in basic training but he was a tender hearted guy too. When it come right down to it he had to be that way I guess to make everybody stay in line where they could control everybody. I've seen my old First Sargent have to pick out a group and go on patrol at night he'd cry like a baby. Because he knew all the men and he just hated to pick him out. That's the reason I never wanted a rank in the Army. And of the qualifications they had for an officer you had to have an IQ above I believe it was 312 or 313 something like that. And of course I had an IQ above that but I didn't want no part of it and that was one reason I didn't.

Interviewer: Did you happen to experience any amounts of dead time or down time when nothing really seemed to happen for a pretty consistent amount of time a couple of days or

Waller: Well we had some in the invasion of Sicily I was in the invasion of Sicily when they announced this points system, I'll tell you about that it's sort of out of line but, on the points system I had three campaigns that I had participated in. I had enough points to come home and of course I was in the hospital then I was in the hospital for three months. I had this tropical fever and I was in hospital I got as far as way out of Atlanta following the sequence. We left Zertia North Africa going to an invasion in Sicily. And we landed at Casa Blanca and that's where I ran into this ole boy I pulled up Casa Blanca in this part of town still burning where they had shelled it American's had shelled it. And this ole boy was on guard there and I said where's the rations, hauling off the back of the truck you know. And he didn't even answer me he said well Son Waller and he was from South Side. A camp above Sicily but wasn't much fighting that went on there the Italians gave up. They would march on each side of the road we couldn't even handle them they were on each side of the road and we were going right through them. Before we got into Calimero we just marched right through that. We got into Calimero Patton was up on the mountain saluting everybody. The infantry hated him but my outfit liked him I wouldn't say like him but they admired him, he was right in the thick of everything.

Interviewer: Well how if you had any free time on your hands at all how did you spend it? Did you write much back home?

Waller: We didn't have any free time. Well we did in England now I was in England a long time preparing for Sicily. I went to England and we were preparing for the invasion of Normandy and we had stare time then played softball I played softball in England. And I really enjoyed my stay in England I was in a hospital and of course no restrictions I was out every night carousing. That's the wildest place I've ever seen in my life.

Interviewer: How would you describe the English people were they pretty resilient pretty positive about

Waller: Oh yeah they were yeah they were I liked them myself I got along with them good.

Interviewer: And of course you said you had free time back in England but when you were off doing your job

Waller: Oh you didn't have any free time no. We had I guess we did when we first the Normandy invasion before we broke out at St. Lo. Way we had some leisure time because they were pretty close to us their guns could reach us. And I don't know I was more or less on my own I had to get that stuff to the tanks. And when they established a beach there they had pardoned off on one side of the beach it was almost cut off. And they would shell the bridge and I'd sit out there and wait until they quite shelling it and I'd go as fast as that ole truck could go across that bridge. They'd knock it out and the engineers would have a pontoon bridge fixed in just a few minutes I wouldn't take them long and ready to go. But I'd sit out there on that hill and wait for them to quit shelling that bridge to get across to my outfit.

Interviewer: During your time overseas did you ever get any leave time an opportunity to come back stateside or maybe get a pass to Paris?

Waller: No I never did go to Paris I of course we seen a sign 25 kilometers to Paris and I checked into the hospital and I never did go back to the war anymore that was it.

Interviewer: And that was the malaria?

Waller: Yeah I stayed in the hospital for three months. They were trying to treat it without taking quinine. I had taken quinine before with that malaria I'd have a chill and the boys would cover me up with coats and things. Get out on the ground and they'd cover me up with their coats I'd shake. After I'd get over that attack well I'd feel pretty good and I'd go on. I was in the hospital when they training all the time they were training to go on an invasion. I went in on D-4 the day I went in at one point I was out there on the ocean all that time on an LST. And but they waited until they got a good foot hold before they let us go in and then when they got a good hold with tanks and everything why the infantry and tanks. I guess I don't remember what infantry outfit was attached to us I'm sure there was an infantry outfit attached to us.

Interviewer: Do you remember what beach you landed at?

Waller: Omaha

Interviewer: Omaha

Waller: Yeah that was we were lucky in my opinion of course that doesn't mean much, just lucky to get away with that beach. The Germans just in tack they could have driven us back in the ocean if they had the tanks and things ready. Because you remember they had SBR all the way through Africa. We traveled at night when we'd travel. And Sicily the same way we traveled of course that wasn't much of a fight in Sicily but we traveled at night we didn't get out of the fox holes in the daytime because they had air superiority. And you didn't dare get out

Interviewer: When you were on the transport in the English Channel waiting to land in Normandy did you get the opportunity to see the congregation of all the ships and men and supplies?

Waller: Yeah I saw quite a few the ones on my particular crew. I don't remember it was a huge convoy of course and we lost a lot of them on the beach because those LSTs would hit the beach and those tanks would go off.

Interviewer: What condition was Omaha beach in when you landed was it still pretty chaotic?

Waller: I remember it wasn't too bad now the tree line off of the beach there all those big trees were cut off by these huge ships big guns on the ships. Just mowed them down just like a tornado just like that one that came through here.

Interviewer: I take it when you were on the English Channel the thought of the German U-boats underneath you was probably pretty high.

Waller: I didn't think too much about it though. We went out there of course we were out there the first day when they first started landing. But we didn't go in until I think it was D-4 when we went in. I remember going in and it was sort a ravine like a gunner bank like where tanks had cut out rows and so forth that you could drive a truck on.

Interviewer: When you were in the field how did you eat did you get any c-rations or any hot meals?

Waller: You didn't get hot meals I said I ate pretty good of course I had it all but they got some good food. Most of it was c-rations and k-rations they got a lot of that and chicken and can chicken. I always ate chicken not always but a pretty good part of the time I did.

Interviewer: Did you have an opportunity to try some of the German rations that were captured?

Waller: No I could have I guess.

Interviewer: You mentioned the air superiority you were in a fox hole for much of the day and you traveled at night. I take it that's when you would catch your sleep during the day in your fox hole?

Waller: Yeah that's when we'd sleep in the fox hole yeah in the day time. The vehicles would be parked hit under camouflaged net or the trees something anyway you could camouflage it.

Interviewer: How often did you feel like you were sleep deprived or that you were exhausted or haven't gotten enough rest?

Waller: I'll tell you I've got to go to sleep. I'll tell you what happened to me I would have gotten court marshaled if they'd have knew I don't this maybe I shouldn't tell you this but I'll tell you anyway. I there was three nights that what we would do we would all pull our bunks right up together we'd stay more or less on our own just the drivers truck drivers the food and gasoline such as that. We'd pull our bunks what do I want to say our sleeping equipment that consisted of blankets and so forth. We'd put it all together and one would just raise up in his mattress or bed it wasn't a bed blankets and so forth and watch guard. Then you'd wake another one up we'd take turns during the night 8 or 10 of us we'd do that. And I know three nights I went to sleep and didn't wake my buddy up and we slept all night without anybody guarding us. That's a harry experience when you wake up and you know all those

people have been depending on you and you've been asleep and didn't wake your buddy up the one that was supposed to relieve you. But that happened I think if I remember correctly three times. Then we slept in if it was a dangerous area we'd sleep in fox holes. But the good thing about it we didn't have to dig any the Germans already had them dug for us. See they as they retreat back they had them

Interviewer: Were you ever promoted in the field?

Waller: What

Interviewer: Were you ever promoted?

Waller: No I didn't want no promotion I was Corporal that's the highest ranks I got. I didn't want any authority I didn't want to tell anybody what to do of course I know that's a bad idea but.

Interviewer: How about the men in your unit did a lot of them seem to get promoted pretty often? The officers or the NCOs?

Waller: Not too much no it was the whole army outfit that I went in with it was an old it wasn't a new outfit it just springing up it was an old. The second armor division had already formed and all so were just replacement that went in there. A lot of people retired and so forth before we went overseas a lot of officers and men and so forth soldiers Sargents.

Interviewer: Were a lot of Europe NCOs and officers were they newer or had they been with the unit for a number of years before hand?

Waller: Yeah I think they the Sargents and so forth had I don't remember well the officer he was a draftee ahead of my company. I was in the service company the 66<sup>th</sup> armored regiment and Calvin I can't think of his last name now he was from Georgia I forget the little ole town where he came from. He was a nice guy.

Interviewer: Could you tell the difference between who were fresh recruits and the ones who had been around for awhile?

Waller: They were the ones the first ones to get killed out of the whole outfit they were the ones to get killed they didn't know how to take care of themselves.

Interviewer: What was your impression of the quality of the Germans or the Italians?

Waller: Well the Italians wouldn't fight in Sicily they gave up marching back. The Germans were good fighters especially those SS troops. They wouldn't take any parishioners a lot of times there wasn't any where they'd sit them out there and shoot you down wouldn't fool with them.

Interviewer: Did you ever come to respect the Germans as an enemy or was there a lot of animosity built up?

Waller: No I looked upon them as an enemy myself and I think everybody else did. I know they did because those tanks getting killed had to. Of course I read in the papers now where people are being court marshaled for killing the enemy well that happens in war I'll tell you it does.

Interviewer: Did you ever feel that all of the Germans were the enemy? Did you feel that the majority of the blame was because of the Nazis and not really the German people?

Waller: Well yeah I think personally of course I never did get to Germany as I said I didn't even get to Paris. But and I didn't have much dealings with the German people. But I don't blame the German people German people were alright but it was the Nazis and Hitler caused all the problems. He could conquered the world in my opinion if he'd have just went on and got England. England was tore all to pieces buzz bombs. I spent a furlough I didn't tell you that you asked me if I had any leisure time when we were training I had a weeks furlough in London one time.

Interviewer: Were they still recovering form the blitz?

Waller: Yeah they hadn't recovered when I came home. Parts of England were tore all to pieces those buzz bombs what they called them.

Interviewer: How did you feel about Churchill?

Waller: Churchill I think he was a good guy I think he was a person that England really needed at that time. What was the other one trying to thought he had peace what was his name I can't think of it now.

Interviewer: Chamberlin?

Waller: I don't know if it was Chamberlin in or not I believe it was Chamberlin I'm not sure. He went to Germany think tried to get peace settled thought he had it and came back with something. I think I'm right on that I don't know.

Interviewer: Did you have any feelings about our allied Joseph Stalin or the Soviet Union?

Waller: No he helped us out an awful lot if we hadn't had him the war Hitler would have just taken all of that area. He had France those French people were I can remember going through little towns before we got to Paris and the French people you can't image out on the streets just lined the streets when we'd go by. They were really happy to see us of course you know they would be but under him and the way he tortured them and killed them.

Interviewer: Do you remember when you first heard about the concentration camps?

Waller: About what?

Interviewer: The concentration camps.

Waller: No I didn't hear too much about them when I was over there. It was later when I was back here reading the paper and so forth when I heard about them. I didn't of courser I didn't see any I didn't get

into Germany but I imagine they were horrible. It looks like some of the people had been starved half to death some of them had I guess.

Interviewer: Did you ever interact with anyone from the other branches of the service the army air core or perhaps the navy? Did you have a chance to meet or

Waller: No I never did have a chance to I can't understand why we have so much bickering now. If they've got to do a job why don't they go on and do it. I can't understand it. If they pull out from over there they'll be bombing us over here suicide bombers will be coming over here. They'll be getting us over here and I'd much rather have it over there than I had over here. I think people don't realize I don't know I guess I'm a Bush man but probably I won't say we shouldn't have gone to Iraq I guess we should have because those people being tortured over there. In fact we went I think that's where we made some mistakes I think the Generals made the mistakes going through all that territory and not controlling it on the way through it. Of course they needed more men to do it I know that's what they need right now if they had it before we wouldn't have had all of this. That's just my opinion I don't know.

Interviewer: You mentioned the masses of Italian troops retreating in Sicily did you ever have an opportunity to speak or interact with any of the prisoners they were taking the Italians?

Waller: No my leader I was telling you about that was his job he took all of the prisoner and marched them back behind the line. He died this year this spring Dickson boy.

Interviewer: Where were you hospitalized at for your malaria?

Waller: I was hospitalized the first time in Sicily. My outfit went off and left me went on to England. And then when they said I was ready to go why they send me put me on an ole limey ship and that thing run wide open, that's an English ship, run wide open sparks you could see them shooting up a mile I just knew a torpedo was going to hit us any minute. But we made it all the way to England they had the thing wide open and I guess they knew what they were doing. Of course we changed directions when, I didn't tell you that, when we'd start out when we left New York we changed directions ever so often. They told me I was told I don't know whether it's right or not that it took so many seconds for a torpedo launch over there where were at to zero in on you. And if they change course zig zag courser they weren't hit all the ships we had I don't think we lost a ship at least I didn't see any and that's what they were doing I think.

Interviewer: How would you rate the medical care you were given in your time in the service when you were hospitalized? Was it pretty adequate?

Waller: Well see all soldieries were given this adagram I don't know whether you knew that or not to keep down malaria. When we went into Africa they issued that and you had to take it. Well I took it for awhile and it just made me deathly sick. I'd just vomit and finally I got a Captain to give me a note where I wouldn't have to take it because you had to take it if you didn't have something to show when you lined up for chow back in I'm talking about in Africa. When we were just sitting back there in the forest

lined up and they made you take it Sargents standing there you had to take it everybody he'd watch you swallow it. And I couldn't take it and I got this Captain he saw me sick one day and he wrote me out a note and I never did take anymore. That's one reason I took malaria I guess but I couldn't take that adagram.

Interviewer: When you were your time over there even though you had a specific job a specific task a duty before did you still grasp the big picture. The overall war what needed to be accomplished did you feel like you were a part of that?

Waller: No I don't think I did I don't think I did. When they broke out of that beach at St. Low it was really something got through the line those tanks just took off.

Interviewer: Did you I understand they didn't let everybody know exactly what was going on when it was going on but did you have any idea of the strategy that was going to be involved in beating Germany?

Waller: No I knew one I knew when we broke out of there we were supposed to encircle Germany I don't know whether we ever did or not. That was the object I remember or somebody told me there I don't know.

Interviewer: Did you ever hear of any news of the Pacific Theatre what was going on around the world?

Waller: No I didn't. No we went to Pearl Harbor and I saw the ships sunk there and since I retired my wife and I went over there. I just wanted to go over there and see it I don't even remember the name of the ship now but it was sunk right there in the harbor.

Interviewer: When did you return back to the states?

Waller: September let's see I'm not sure the exact date sometime in September I think of 45. I believe that's when it was I'm not sure. But I like I told you before I had enough points and they flew me back home. I've had the malaria once or twice since I've been back the same kind of malaria. But never could find in the blood stream I put in for a pension of course I didn't get it. And they said you'd have to find it in your blood stream and it's hard for them to detect it in my blood stream. I don't know why but they never detected it as many times as I've had them check it just one time just before we got into Paris the only time they ever found it in my bloodstream. Then they sent me back to a hospital.

Interviewer: How did you stay in the hospital?

Waller: I was in there about three months. They didn't want I don't remember what they did but I didn't want to go back to the front. And I had an old Major he didn't want me to go back. And he protected me I've seen him argue with the Colonels people over him when they wanted me to go back. They said I had an enlarged spleen and I don't know whether I did or not I don't know I felt pretty good to tell you the truth but I didn't want to go back.

Interviewer: Right

Waller: Because I figured I had done my part and gone through all of that and I didn't go back. And the Battle of the Bulge I imagine a lot of my buddies got killed in that big battle. I've had one of my buddies to come see me since I've been here one that I was real close to. He's driving a big transport truck with automobiles on it he came in down at the mall down town Two Rivers Mall. And looked me up his boy got killed I never did go see his mommy and daddy. I should have gone and told them what I knew about him but I never did that's always bugged my why I didn't but I never did. And they were getting a divorce when we went overseas and we called them I talked to them in New York just before I left. See buddy and I were out we were in New York that day of course we weren't supposed to be but we were in New York having a big time. And of course we were restricted and he talked to them and he said he'd never come back and he didn't. But I always said I was coming back I never gave up hope but he never thought he would come back. His mom and dad were getting a divorce while we were overseas that was hard on him. Them boys used to get these what did they use to call them Dear John letters or something?

Interviewer: Yes

Waller: This ole boy that came to see me his wife did him the same way.

Interviewer: How often did that seem to happen the Dear John letter?

Waller: It happened out here too. I wasn't married then glad I wasn't. I've been retired well next month it will be 25 years I've been retired. Of course I worked in the school system 29 years I was principle of this ole Sango School they tore down. I was principal of it three or four years and I went into the main office with Bill Sanford when he went in as superintendent.

Interviewer: Well you spoke about seeing Patton solute you guys did you ever get to hear any speeches Patton gave?

Waller: No well he gave us one at Fort Benning Georgia every other word was a cuss word. He was a tough character I never will forget that speech all blood and guts. That's before we left Fort Benning.

Interviewer: You said the infantry didn't seem to care for him too much but

Waller: No he wanted to take something he'd just throw men in there until he got it. He was the same way with tanks too though. But this ole boys I told you about had three tanks I believe it was three tanks knocked out from under him and he they finally got him that third one they got him. But he just wasn't satisfied if he wasn't in that tank he just I don't know I guess you see some guys like that. But I wasn't that way I wanted to get out of the army didn't want anything to do with it but I was going to do my part while I was in there I didn't shirk any of my duties or anything.

Interviewer: How did you feel on VE and VJ Days?

Waller: Oh man bomb fires when I was in England of course still in the hospital but I was out that night. They had fires in the street everywhere. People were really celebrating and I guess they had a right to because they really had been under so much. (Tape ended)